

September 2016

Y7 letter

Dear

Student Name:

What we term "the roll-over" has been and gone and we hope and trust that **Name** now feels much more a part of our school: the next 5 school years, and beyond, will be eventful, enjoyable and, we have absolutely no doubt, successful for all of us, especially for **Name**.

You will find enclosed with this letter a data collection sheet which will ask for certain information. We are particularly keen to have e-mail addresses for all parents as this will be our preferred method of communication when letters need to be sent home.

This new Year 7 is potentially one of the very best in school in terms of ability and we will continue to require all students to always try hard and to give their best no matter how difficult the work may be. Everybody, irrespective of ability, is capable of excellent effort, and to do less will not be good enough. In return, students can expect talented and driven teachers who will work hard to ensure as much student learning as possible.

We will continue to work hard to improve outcomes for our young people despite inevitable Government cuts to school budgets – already happening – and changes to curriculum and assessment. We will never let league table positions dictate what we do and, when there is a conflict between what is best for the school and what is best for the individual student, the needs of the student will always come first.

Many will claim the upper school years (Years 10 and 11) to be the most important years. We here at Clifton know that the work done and progress achieved in the 'early' years (Years 7, 8 and 9) is critical and the importance of pace and challenge at the beginning of secondary school should not be underestimated.

Great strides will continue to be made and we make no apology for our impatience with anything less than the very best from everyone involved.

We are excited by the prospect of working with you. The combination: home, school, and student here at Clifton will prove to be unbeatable.

Yours sincerely

David Hudson OBE
Executive Headteacher

Tony Hardcastle
Headteacher

Laura Miller
Head of Year 7

Some points to note:

- Students will be expected to wear uniform properly at all times - top button fastened with the tie showing properly, no garish belts; footwear should be sensible, black shoes (no trainers/Timberland/Ugg boots), no canvas pumps or shoes with the laces unfastened. Please do not purchase canvas pumps or boots to be used at school. The importance of this is misunderstood in many schools. It is far from trivial and it is not negotiable here at Clifton.
- Mobile phones should not be brought to school.
- We continue to have an open access policy in school and students will be allowed inside the buildings at break times. They can bring sandwiches and they can take advantage of our cashless lunch arrangements. However, they are not allowed to go off site at breaks or lunchtimes as we cannot guarantee their safety if they do.
- We would be grateful if you could regularly check and sign your child's planner. Your Head of Year is Miss Miller.
- Too many of our students are coming to school having had little or no breakfast and a significant number are calling at a shop and buying sweets and high energy fizzy drinks. The sugar overload that they regularly put into their bodies will often severely inhibit their ability to learn and/or to behave and all parents should exercise control in this area.
- Communication via social media is on the rise, and sites such as Snapchat, Facebook and Instagram are regularly used by many of our students. When used appropriately, these are useful tools for communication and even learning. This said, they are open to misuse. Some people feel that they can make cruel and malicious comments on public forums or via messaging services about others, saying things they would never dream of saying in person. We at Clifton see this for what it is: bullying. We cannot, and will not, accept this.

We therefore require your support as parents in regularly checking your child's phone and social media output. We'd also suggest that you check who they 'allow' to view their pages, or who they are 'friends' with to ensure that they can only message, or receive messages, from those they are actually friends with.

- 100% attendance should be the norm. 95% attendance is the whole school target, but 95% attendance per student should not be regarded as "good" since it represents 2 full weeks off school. Please don't book holidays in school time. Holidays taken during term-time will not be authorised and you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice issued through the Local Authority. Per child this would be £60 if paid within 28 days. Please ensure that you always ring school each and every day that your child is ill.
- An important date for your diary is 29th September. This will be our annual form tutor evening, which will be an invaluable opportunity to come and meet your child's form tutor and discuss their effort, attendance and progress. Your child's form tutor will be in touch with you very soon to make an appointment with you for this evening at a mutually convenient time.

Enc:
Data Collection sheet